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Standards-Based Innovation: Technical standards support and promote innovation

Posted by Kshemendra Paul, ISE Program Manager on Wednesday, December 28, 2011

In the ISE, as we promote technical standards to further our information sharing mission, some have pointed to a possible tension between the idea of ?standards,? IT that supports concrete, repeatable processes, and ?innovation,? which connotes agility, resourcefulness, and using whatever is at hand to get the job done. On the contrary, we believe that standards support innovation - standards enable innovative approaches to information sharing across agencies, departments, and different levels of government. Without technical standards, we're all speaking different languages, which hinders progress and innovation.

Our partners at IJIS recently captured this well, explaining how standards and innovation are complementary, not opposed. Check out Paul Wormeli?s recent blog post, Do standards defeat innovation? [1]

Some excerpts:

> Kshemendra Paul, who runs the Program Management office for the Information Sharing Environment (PM-ISE), is fond of talking about his vision of the future being built on ?standards based innovation??which sounds like a good slogan, until someone asks if this is an oxymoron. If information technology is based on standards, is there any room for innovation? Or to put it another way, if the government issues standards for information technology, is the message to forget about new ways of doing things? ...
>
> In fact, standards are the building blocks that enable a new level of innovation. The kind of standards that the PM-ISE will focus on have to do with enabling innovation in information sharing that will improve decision making across communities of interest beyond what could happen without the standards.

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